



CNMI-FEMA JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Office of the Governor

CNMI JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Preventing Post-Typhoon Molding in Households and Establishments

The likelihood of finding mold in households and properties increases drastically due to water damage caused by flooding, backed-up sewage, leaks, damp spaces, overflows or high humidity caused by a typhoon or hurricane. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in collaboration with the CNMI government encourages the community to take the following precautionary information and measures to ensure that their homes do not pose an immediate threat due to molding post-super typhoon Yutu.

MEDICAL RISKS WITH MOLDING

Mold spores or molding are caused by high humidity, moisture and water and can easily be distributed in the air due to their microscopic size. It can cause a variety of health issues to anyone if not immediately removed after a disaster.

Mold poses a direct threat particularly to those with existing health issues such as asthma, allergies or respiratory problems; nasal, sinus and cough congestion; eyes, nose and skin irritation; nervous system issues; aches and pains; and other related medical conditions and symptoms.

Infants, children, elderly and those with weak immune systems are also susceptible to the hazardous effects of molding in homes and are encouraged to stay away from moldy sites until it has been completely removed.

MOLD REMOVAL

Molding occurs within the first 24-48 hours after contamination if not tended to immediately after a typhoon and can also occur despite no visible damages to your property. All contaminated materials and properties that cannot be cleaned and dried should be removed and thrown away.

If possible, mold should be removed professionally. If you must remove the mold yourself, the following tips should be sufficient in removal and repair of your homes, establishments and properties:

- **Utilize the Right Cleaning Materials**
 - Trash bags, sponge, rags, scrub brush, broom, mop, buckets, correct cleaning products such as detergent and other necessary materials.
- **Wear Protective Gear**
 - Protective eye masks/goggles, filter facemasks, gloves, long sleeved shirts, long pants, waterproof boots and other gear that will help you avoid contact with mold.
- **Dry the Structure**
 - Ensure all doors and windows are open to let the air out for at least 30 minutes before you stay any length of time.
 - Open inside doors, especially closets and interior rooms.
 - Open all cabinets and wipe them clean.
- **Circulate Air**

- Use fans and dehumidifiers when safe. Position fans to blow air out through doors and windows.
- **Remove All Contaminated Materials**
 - Locate all contaminated structure materials and personal property. Remove and dispose of anything that was wet and can't be cleaned and dried completely.
- **Clean the Property**
 - Clean with water and detergent to remove all visible molds. Do not mix cleaning products together, such as bleach and ammonia because it can create toxic vapors. After cleaning, immediately take a shower and change your clothes as soon as possible to avoid carrying mold to your living quarters.
- **Repair the Property**
 - Do not paint or caulk over mold, as it will not prevent it from growing. All molds must be removed and all areas must be disinfected before repairs can be done.

For more information regarding preventing molding after a natural disaster, visit <https://www.fema.gov>.

Follow CNMI on Social Media

The CNMI Joint Information Center (JIC) urges the community to follow the following social media platforms to get the latest weather updates and information:

- CNMI EOC State Warning Point Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/cnmieocswp/>
- CNMI Office of the Governor Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CNMIGov/>
- Governor Ralph DLG. Torres Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ralphdlg.torres/>
- CNMI Joint Information Center: <https://www.facebook.com/JICNMI/>

The CNMI JIC also encourages residents to download HSEM's *readyCNMI* App available for FREE in the Apple iStore or Google PlayStore to receive the latest weather updates and notifications.

For more information or media inquiries, contact Nadine Deleon Guerrero, HSEM External Affairs Officer at ncdlg@cnmihsem.gov.mp.

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